

## Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** October 7, 2015, 4:30 pm

**Commissioners Present:** Rita Church, Allison Curran, Lainey Rappaport, Barry Trutor, Donna Waldron

**Staff Present:** Anne D’Alton, Cemetery Office Assistant; Deryk Roach, Parks Dept.

**Public Present:** Liisa Reimann, Preservation Burlington

**Attachments:** Excerpt from a spreadsheet listing Lakeview Cemetery Building repair priorities  
Facility Condition Assessment and Level I Energy Audit of Lakeview Cemetery Building, 11.11.2014, with extra copy of Replacement Reserves Report, Lakeview Cemetery Building, 11.11.2014  
Letter to Bob Rustin from Barry Trutor dated 10.07.15

### I. Agenda approval

- A. Barry Trutor added presentation of his letter to Bob Rustin as Item V.A. Unanimously approved.

### II. Approval of Minutes from September 17, 2015 Meeting

- A. Unanimously approved.

### III. Old Business

- A. Tabled from July 9, 2015 mtg.:
  - 1. Request to re-define resident status for lot purchase.
    - ◆ Donna Waldron asked that Annie D’Alton review the problem: Situations occur where D’Alton feels that the rule governing determination of whether the resident or non-resident price should be charged needs to be changed. The current rule is that the residence of the lot owner is what determines the price charged. So if a Burlington resident dies and his non-resident family buys a lot for him, they have to pay the non-resident price. Sometimes the family is upset & perplexed about the need to pay the non-resident price. In order to avoid the higher non-resident price, sometimes non-residents have residents buy the lot for them and transfer it, or list the lot owner as the estate of the deceased. D’Alton would like to approach this determination in a manner that shows fairness and caring on the part of the City, not grasping for money.
    - ◆ Waldron suggested charging resident price if the lot is to be used only for the resident, and they must have been born in Burlington—if other family members intend to use the lot, charge the non-resident price.
    - ◆ Trutor suggested charging resident price if deceased was a resident at the time of death.
    - ◆ Allison Curran noted that any change could involve creating grey areas, and the determination should be clear.



- ◆ Trutor suggested asking Commission to decide on a case-by-case basis. D'Alton responded that often time-sensitivity would not allow for this process.
- ◆ Lainey Rappaport noted that the situation is complicated.
- ◆ Deryk Roach suggested leaving it up to the discretion of the Cemetery. D'Alton responded that the Office Assistant has neither the authority nor the responsibility to make policy decisions.
- ◆ D'Alton could not find documentation for the reason why the Commission started charging more for lots purchased by non-residents. The first indication of the rate difference found was in 1993. Perhaps the same rationale was used that the Library uses: The Library charges non-residents for membership because they do not pay taxes and the Library is supported by tax revenue.
- ◆ Summary of polling of area cemeteries about this issue (from 5/5/2015 supporting document to 7.09.2015 Commission Mtg):

**SUMMARY:**

Of the 22 towns asked, 20 responded-- 10 discriminate between residents & non-residents.

Of these 10, 4 require that lot owner is or was a resident.

Of these 10, resident status is based on:

--for 6: the lot purchaser's residence, but lot purchaser is considered a resident if they lived in or have family in town.

--for 1: if the purchaser pays property or business taxes.

--for 1: person to be interred.

--for 1: the issue is currently under discussion.

--for 1: the issue has not come up, but they think it would be based on the residency of the person to be interred.

- ◆ The Commissioners noted that there could be legal ramifications if a consistent policy is not in place. Final conclusion was that D'Alton would ask the City Attorney for advice, especially if a lot can be purchased by the estate of the deceased.
2. Follow up on Martha Keenan getting back to the Commission concerning which category Chapel repair falls under. The list from the Assessment document includes Chapel repairs, and indicates when projects will be done (2015-2033). Roach described the major priorities on the Lakeview Cemetery Building Repair list. Priorities have been determined by weighing need, expense that would result from further postponement, and budget allocations.
- ◆ Paving contract signed, to start in about a week: Entrance and exit hill section will get a 1" surface coat with shimming up of low spots. 3" is standard, so this won't be an ideal solution, but it addresses the worst areas with the money allowed. The north entrance will be improved to prevent bottoming-out, too.
  - ◆ Curb replacement: Professional advice is to wait until a full-depth repaving is done.
  - ◆ Retaining wall repair: Still working on choosing a solution. Best fix would be to extend the wall to stabilize flower bed bank, but not enough funds for this right now. Also, the footings/foundation at the north end of the house/porch has been affected and needs shoring up.
  - ◆ Fence: There may be historic preservation considerations for choosing replacement. Rita Church will consult with Friends of Lakeview Cemetery about the entrance gate (Was it a donation? If so by whom? Are there restrictions to altering it?).
  - ◆ Roof: Slate will be repaired soon, and roofer will see if they can add side porch roof repair (which has leaked badly for years, affection wood of porch ceiling and floor).



- ◆ Rappaport asked why the Lakeview sign is at the bottom of the hill and not at the top? Roach said signage would be discussed later.
- ◆ Waldron thanked Roach for the presentation, and said the Commission is really looking forward to seeing some of these long-awaited repairs done.
- ◆ Roach invited questions and reminded Commissioners to email staff with any further concerns.

- B. Tabled from August 13, 2015 mtg.: Request from staff for Commission approval of mausoleum site. (Not discussed).

#### **IV. Superintendent's Items**

- A. Roach reported that Parks Department Head Jesse Bridges wanted Roach to describe maintenance plans in detail.

#### **V. Commissioner's Items**

- A. Letter to Bob Rustin from Barry Trutor dated 10.07.15
1. Trutor feels it is important to present Bob Rustin with a list of questions about the management of the Cemetery's Perpetual Care Fund, and asked the Commissioners to consider the questions he delineated, and add to it or edit as needed.
- B. Next meeting set for Thursday, December 3, 2015, 4:30 pm, Cemetery Office.
- C. Waldron asked that this item be included on Agenda for next meeting:
1. Waldron reported that Bridges asked all Commissioners to research funding possibilities through grants.
- D. Trutor asked Waldron what City Council's final conclusion was about the future of the Cemetery Commission. Waldron said that the Commission made their point, there was good support from the community, and the City Council decided not to eliminate the Cemetery Commission, or make it a Parks Commission Committee.

#### **VI. Office Report**

- A. Volunteer Gail Asbury is making slow but steady progress with burial data entry.
- B. Volunteer Deb Light is making slow but steady progress with researching the formerly-considered-illegible interment log entries of 1920-1921, moving toward recreating the log and printing burial cards to rectify the records. Note that the Cemetery Office has potentially been mistakenly responding to inquiries concerning the burial of these people for almost 100 years.
- C. D'Alton expressed a lot of frustration with a recently-renewed inability to reconcile the Accounts Receivable records reported in the City's New World accounting software with her office records. For example: The FY16 reports are showing revenue from FY15. Staff in the City Clerk's Office will not respond to email requests to correct this, or give assistance in understanding any errors D'Alton is making in utilizing New World, if that is the problem. There is much, much more deferred document maintenance, correction and preservation work to do than could ever be done in a 20-hour/week job, and much of that 20 hours needs to be spent on the priority work of answering inquiries from the public, showing and selling lots, preparing for and documenting burials, and supervising volunteers. Reconciling the office's



financial records should be a simple, standard procedure with any necessary support provided in a timely manner.

## **VII. Adjournment**

- A. The meeting adjourned informally at 6:00, after a discussion with Liisa Reimann:
  - 1. Preservation Burlington is making October Cemetery Month. Activities include 2 tours on 10.31.15 at noon and 1 pm, followed by a talk at the Champlain Club on Crowley Street by Scott McLaughlin.
  - 2. Reimann invited the Commissioners to be interviewed on the Alive at 521 TV show. Curran and Waldron expressed an interest.
  - 3. Reimann expressed interest in partnering with the Commission on programs, and asked for ideas.
  - 4. Trutor recalled that Reimann was the author of a well-written article about Elmwood Cemetery in the Preservation Burlington newsletter, The Sentinel.
  - 5. Reimann invited all to attend the Preservation Burlington Board meetings on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm.